

THE
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NEW SERIES.

WM. B. FOWLE, EDITOR.

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NO. 5.

THE DUTY OF GOVERNMENT

IN REGARD TO GENERAL EDUCATION.

[Continued from No. IV.]

Another subject of State glorification in the annual message of our Governor is the Common Schools. There can be no doubt that, to these we are indebted for much of the power and influence that Massachusetts exercises among her sister States ; and there can be as little doubt, that the schools have been somewhat improved within the last twelve years. But, in the mind of the true philanthropist, the question is not what are the schools, nor how far are they superior to the schools of other communities, but, *Are they all they should be ? All they can be made ?* Now, no fact seems to be more apparent than the alarming one, that vice and crime are on the increase, and the proportion of juvenile offenders greater and greater from year to year. The late Secretary of the Board of Education deplored the waste of time and money arising from absence, tardiness, and the general neglect of the schools. Truancy, he thought, had hitherto resisted all endeavors to suppress it. The towns make niggardly appropriations ; the school committees are nominal supervisors only ; the teachers are to an alarming degree young, inexperienced, and altogether unfitted to do more than teach the elements of a few branches ; the formation of character, the main object of education, being generally neglected by teachers, parents, committees and magistrates. Now, it is a fact that the average time that the district teachers of Massachusetts are engaged in teaching does not exceed two years, and the average age of the teachers probably does not exceed twenty one years.

The teachers, too, are not generally well educated men and women; they are rather remarkable, as a body, for lack of dignity, general knowledge, and high moral aims; their manners are seldom fit models for imitation; too few of them are religious persons, and by this we do not mean zealous sectarians, but persons feeling a deep responsibility for the present and eternal welfare of their pupils. This has been their character for a century or more, and no effort, at all adequate to the exigency, has ever been made to provide a better class of teachers. It was not until about twelve years ago, that the idea of preparing teachers was started, and then it was very reluctantly received. Through the labors of Mr. Mann and the money of Mr. Dwight, the State allowed three Normal Schools to be opened, and by stinted grants, she has contrived to keep them puny, half-supplied, and quite inefficient, ever since. It must be allowed, that some good teachers, better than most who had previously taught in the districts, have issued from these schools; we know several who are ornaments to the profession; but we know also, that a large proportion of those, who have attended our Normal Schools, have been inferior teachers, not so much from defective instruction, as from natural unfitness for the work of education. A large number of the graduates have never attempted to teach; a large number of the best have gone into private schools and academies; a large number have left the State. Many males, have gone into business, and many females into matrimony, which they have found more pleasant and more profitable than the care of a district school, and quite incompatible with it. We learn from the Governor's Address, that, in 1849, the number of teachers employed in our public schools, was 8163. The number instructed at the three Normal Schools can not be ascertained from any printed document. Of one school, that had been in operation four years, the Board say, "The Statistical returns show that a *very small* proportion (The italics are theirs) of the scholars remain at the school long enough to be able to supply many deficiencies, or to make many acquirements." Of another, that has continued five years, the Board say, "243 had been admitted and about 122," that is, about one half, "were supposed to be teaching." The other school was suspended some years, and has not sent forth many pupils. From this statement it will appear, that the whole number of graduates sent forth from our three Normal Schools is very inconsiderable, and the number of actual teachers, altogether too small to authorize any hope that the quality of the 8163 is, by this means, to be greatly improved. And yet the Address tells us, "The three State Normal Schools are well attended and prosperous," and

"The Reports of the Board in regard to the public schools are satisfactory," &c. That we are not alone in our opinions, and in our fears, may be seen from an article in our last number, which is one of a series lately printed in the Boston Mercantile Journal, and written, as the initials W. A. A. show, by one of the best judges in the State, and one of the best informed and most unflinching friends of our school system. We trust the attention of the people will, ere long, be turned to the schools, and that they will demand of the legislature, more Normal Schools, and instruction better adapted to the actual wants of the district schools;—that none but suitable persons, shall be admitted as pupils; that they shall be supported by the State, and bound to teach common schools in Massachusetts; that the subjects taught in the Normal Schools shall be such as ought to be taught in the District Schools, and such only, until the schools are supplied with competent teachers, when only the standard may with safety be raised. Unless something of this sort is done, and done speedily too, the experiment of Normal Schools will be terminated by the common sense of the people, and their name changed to Academies, into which they have so nearly degenerated.

The governor gives but a slight glance at the Teachers' Institutes, which he says "are important auxiliaries to the Normal Schools." Whether he thinks they may be better conducted or not, does not appear. We are afraid that he is not fully aware of their great importance in the present state of our teachers, and of the general neglect into which they have fallen. The Legislature, with unprecedented liberality, voted to appropriate two hundred dollars for each and every institute that might be holden in the State, but it so fettered the grant that few Institutes have been held, and the prospect is, that they will soon be entirely discontinued. Instead of *requiring* one to be held in every county, twice a year at least, it only *allows* one to be holden when fifty or sixty teachers apply for it. The consequence is that few applications are made, and a full attendance is not secured after all the precautions. In Maine, they hold an Institute in each of the thirteen counties, and leave the teachers to attend or not, as they please. The result has been, that they have collected four teachers to our one. Few young persons intending to teach can afford to support themselves at a Normal School one year, and few who could afford it would think it an object to do so, unless they intended to make teaching a permanent employment. But, when the Normal School is brought to their own doors, as it were, and the sacrifice of only a week or two required, all who have any character will avail them-

selves of it. If the teachers of Institutes are men of character, and good manners, and great experience and skill,—and no others ought to be employed,—much may be done in a few days, not to make up for defective knowledge in the branches to be taught, (and here is where the Normal Schools spend too much of their strength), but, in showing how instruction should be given to children, instruction not only in what are called the common branches, but in manners, conduct, life, and all that goes to constitute a perfect character. We consider the great defect in our common schools to be this want of systematic moral and religious instruction, and until this is obtained, it will be of small consequence what is studied in them, or how the common branches, as the perishable ones are called, are taught.

[To be continued.]

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE DOGS.—A FABLE.

In a district inhabited only by shepherds, a difficulty once arose, because some of the dogs employed to assist in tending the flocks, which all ran in common, made more havoc among the sheep than the wolves themselves. The evil at last grew so serious, that a meeting of the shepherds was held to determine what was best to be done. A few of them proposed to kill all the dogs, and try to do without them; but, as the greater part were acknowledged to be not only innocent but useful, the more humane proposed not to kill them, but to confine such as were dangerous, and, in future, to have all the young ones trained at the public expense. To this, some of the shepherds, who had the largest flocks, objected on the ground of its injustice. Let every man train his own dogs, said they, for ours are nearly all males, and have no young; or, if we have one or two occasionally, we can take care of them, and will never be compelled to pay for the training of other men's puppies. In reply, it was said, "Your sheep mix with ours, and must suffer with them. The common safety requires that ALL should be trained, but you see that all will not be trained, if it is left, as now, to individuals. Besides, when all share the expense, all will have a right to insist upon their being all trained, and will have a voice in the direction of it. The untrained dogs will eat the sheep, if they are not taught better, and those who have the largest flocks, will, of course, be the greatest sufferers." But the wealthier shepherds prevailed; the number of untrained dogs increased, and it was soon found that more sheep had been eaten than would have paid for the training or education of

all the dogs ten times over. It even seemed as if the evil disposed dogs could distinguish the sheep of the rich shepherds from those of their masters, and selected them for slaughter. At last the wealthy shepherds called a general meeting, and expressed a willingness to bear their proportion of the expense of educating *all* the puppies; but the poorer shepherds now said, "We suffer little or no injury from the dogs, but, if they annoy you, you are at liberty to take them and train them—at your own expense."

THE FREE SCHOOL LAW OF NEW YORK.

Our readers have already been informed that the people of New York, after a smart discussion of the subject, have voted by a large majority to place their schools on the same footing with those of Massachusetts, and of the other New England States. The town of Hector, where the following Resolutions in regard to the new statute were unanimously passed, is not at the north, among the Esquimaux, nor at the south, among the Patagonians. We publish the whole Document from a New York paper, for none of it can be spared from the history of human nature, and short-sighted selfishness.

FREE SCHOOL LAW.—At a large and respectable meeting of the friends of education, held at the village of Reynolds, in Hector, in the county of Tompkins, N. Y., on the 1st day of February, 1850, called for the purpose of taking into consideration some measures for the repeal of the "Free School Law,"

On motion, Hon. Thomas B. Sears was chosen President, and Hon. John Sayler, Joseph Carson, and Isaac Banker, Esqrs., Vice Presidents, and Hon. Henry Fish, Obadiah Chase, Esq. and Capt. Philo Sacket, Secretaries.

On motion, the President appointed the following named persons as a committee on Resolutions, viz: Robert Darling, Harris Scovill, James M. Donnely, David Gilmer, and Henry S. Owen, who submitted the following resolutions, which were read and adopted unanimously.

1st. Resolved, That civil government is essential for the well being of mankind, and that good laws are necessary for the support of civil government, and that it is the interest and solemn duty of all men under such government and laws to abide, maintain and support the same; but when, by mistake or erroneous legislation, laws are passed, which are unequal in their nature, and unjust and oppressive in their operation, by imposing burthens upon one class for the benefit of another, without just compensation, it is the privilege, and

becomes the bounden duty of those aggrieved to appeal to the law-making power to get them abrogated.

2d. Resolved, That the law, entitled "An act establishing Free Schools throughout the State," passed March 26, 1849, is a misnomer and a foul blot upon our Statute books; that it is unjust and unequal in its provisions and operations, by imposing oppressive taxes upon the prudent and industrious class, for the benefit of another class, by which means the ties of friendship in neighborhood are broken up, and heart burnings and strife engendered, and by which a selfish and wanton spirit is encouraged on the one side, and a spirit of resistance to the laws is created on the other side, thereby causing the laws to become disrespected, and the stability of civil government endangered.

3d. Resolved, That we consider the adoption of said misnamed "Free School Law" to have been a bold step towards agrarianism, and that the more such principles are encouraged by legislative enactment, the more anxious a certain class will get to have an equal division made of all the property in the State, an example of which we have fully had by their votes at the last annual election.

4th. Resolved, That we consider said law to be worse than the enactments of Great Britain, which caused the American Revolution, for they were enforced by a despotic foreign power, but this School Law is enforced upon us unjustly, by our neighbors, whom we heretofore considered and treated as friends.

5th. Resolved, That we are alarmed at the rapid increase of taxation, and rely upon the wisdom of the Legislature for the arrest of its progress; and fondly indulge the hope that we shall not be compelled to endure the humiliating transition from the elevated position of Free Men, to the deplorable condition of free slaves.

6th. Resolved, That we will continue to petition the Legislature until we get a repeal of this odious School Law, or fail in the undertaking; it having been uncalled for by the people, and in our opinion is unconstitutional.

7th. Resolved, That these proceedings be signed by the officers of this meeting, and that copies be transmitted to the Hon. Mr. Stanton of the Senate from this district, and to the Hon. Messrs. Brewer and Cady of the Assembly from this county;—and that they be published in the Albany Argus, Albany Evening Journal, Ithaca Journal, Ithaca Chronicle, Free Enquirer, at Jefferson, and Havana Journal.

THOMAS B. SEARS, *President.*

HENRY FISH,	}	<i>Secretaries.</i>	J. CARSON,	}	<i>Vice Presidents.</i>
P. SACKET,			J. SAYLER,		
O. CHASE,			I. BANKER,		

We know not which most to admire the desperate character of the sixth resolution or its desperately bad grammar.

The experiment of Free schools in Massachusetts, which has continued for more than two whole centuries, has not yet advanced us one step towards Agrarianism; and has not begun to reduce us to "the deplorable condition of free slaves." We cannot seriously undertake to answer the sophistry of the Tompkins resolutions, but we shall give an extract from one of the greatest men in the world, and another from one of the best men in Massachusetts, (both men manufactured by this *wicked* free school system), to show how the thing is understood by those who have tried it.

DANIEL WEBSTER says, "In this particular, New England may be allowed to claim, I think, a merit of a peculiar character. She early adopted and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the undoubted right, and the bounden duty of the government, to provide for the instruction of all youth. That which is elsewhere left to chance, or to charity, we secure by law. For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in proportion to his property, and we look not to the question whether he himself have, or have not, children to be benefited by the education for which he pays. We regard it as a wise and liberal system of police, by which property, and life, and the peace of society are secured. We seek to prevent, in some measure, the extension of the penal code, by inspiring salutary and conservative principles of virtue and knowledge in an early age. We hope to excite a feeling of respectability, and a sense of character, by enlarging the capacity, and increasing the sphere of intellectual enjoyment. By general instruction, we seek, as far as possible, to purify the whole moral atmosphere; to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law, and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for a security, beyond the law, and above the law, in the prevalence of enlightened and well-principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue and prolong the time, when, in the villages and farm-houses of New England, there may be undisturbed sleep within unbarred doors. And knowing that our government rests directly on the public will, that we may preserve it, we endeavor to give a safe and proper direction to that public will. We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers or statesmen; but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of our system of government rests on the trust, that, by the diffusion of general knowledge and good and virtuous senti-

ments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness."

GOVERNOR BRIGGS, in his late Annual Message, says, "The people of Massachusetts expend annually for educational purposes more than a million of dollars. Whether paid in the form of taxes, or by voluntary contributions, nothing could furnish better evidence of a wise and prudent foresight, or of an enlightened philanthropy, than the appropriation of such an amount of money for the purposes of education. No tax could be imposed, and in no manner could so much money be expended, in which every class of people would share so equally in its benefits. The rich are amply repaid for all they expend in the protection which the education of the poor secures to them against the depredations of ignorance and of crime. It is the best insurance on property, at the lowest premium. It is the surest guarantee for the safety and morals of a community that can be effected. While it saves the expense of poor-houses, jails and penitentiaries, it does what is infinitely more important;—it rescues the unfortunate beings who would otherwise have been the inmates of those wretched abodes of suffering and fallen humanity, and elevates them to the true condition of moral, intellectual and immortal beings. That legislature, or that people, which shall do the most to advance this cause of civilization, patriotism and Christianity, may expect, what is far more desirable than the loudest and longest applause that ever burst from an excited multitude, the blessing of God and the blessing of the poor."

Thus says the Governor, and all the people of Massachusetts to the end of time will heartily exclaim, Amen.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. NO. IV.—CALEB BINGHAM.

The publication of Webster's English Grammar was not followed by the general introduction of this branch of study even into the private schools. About the same time that it appeared, Caleb Bingham, a graduate of Dartmouth College, a native also of Connecticut, came to Boston, and opened a private school which probably did more than any other circumstance to bring on the great reformation of the city schools in 1790. His pupils were females only, and, as females were not then admitted into the public schools, his school was filled. English Grammar was there taught for the first time in Boston, but what text book, or whether any was used, is unknown to us, though we have reason to think the manu-

script of the Young Lady's Accidence, which Mr. Bingham afterwards printed, was used. The title of this second American English Grammar was, "THE YOUNG LADY'S ACCIDENCE; or a short and easy Introduction to English Grammar, Designed principally for the use of Young Learners, more especially those of the Fair Sex, though proper for either. By Caleb Bingham, A. M."

This little manual, (60 pages, of small size), made no pretensions, and was probably only intended for an abstract of principles to be explained and applied by the teacher. The author allows ten parts of speech, the article and participle being included. He allows three cases to nouns and pronouns and three genders; one state and two degrees of comparison to adjectives; only two kinds of verbs, transitive and intransitive; five modes; five tenses in the Indicative, the second future being omitted. He recognizes the *progressive* or *definite* form, *I am loving*, *I was loving*, &c. His Imperative has but one tense, which he calls *present*, and to which he allows no first or third person. In this respect he agrees with Webster, but, how they can make a *present* tense of such expressions as, "Send me the money *to-morrow*; Go to the city *next week*; Love God *always*; *never* oppress the poor, &c.," it is difficult to determine.

Mr. Bingham gave three tenses to the Potential mode, the *Present*, which includes the present and imperfect of Webster and Murray; the *Perfect*, which includes their perfect and pluperfect tenses, and the *Future*, which is only the present with an adverb or some expression denoting futurity. The tenses run thus,

Present, I may, can, must, might, would, could, should love.

Perfect, I may, can, must, might, would, could, should have loved.

Future, I may, can, must, might, would, could, should love *to-morrow*.

The Subjunctive of Mr. Bingham has but four tenses, viz.,

1. *Present*, If I love. 2. *Imperfect*, If I loved or did love.

3. *Perfect*, If I have or had loved. 4. *Future*, If I should or would love.

The rest of the book has no peculiarities. The rules of Syntax are more numerous than Webster's. Eleven pages, at the end of the book, are devoted to Exercises in False Grammar.

It may be thought that we devote too much space to this small book, but it is curious, as a book that preceded Murray and his countless followers; as the first grammar used in the Boston schools, and as the work of one of the most successful teachers, and most amiable men that we have ever known.

It was with this manual that we commenced the *study* of English Grammar, and we never shall forget our first lesson,

or rather the circumstances that attended it. Our class consisted of twelve forms, each of which recited a grammar lesson on successive days, so that we had a lesson about once a fortnight, unless we rose in the class by spelling better than our neighbors. But so formidable was the Grammar lesson, that, instead of trying to get up, we generally tried to get down to avoid it. The form that recited, was not required to spell for the day, and none could get down or up into it. When our day came, we learned the first six lines, which contained the names of the ten "sorts of words," and recited them at least twenty times to our neighbors; but, when called up to the Master's desk to recite them, our mind became a perfect blank. We stood mute and trembling, and, after receiving a scolding for laziness, we were condemned to stand on a box, with our face to the wall, till we could recite the lesson. Of course, we hated English Grammar from that day forward, and time has only satisfied us that both the manner of teaching, and the matter taught, were only fit—to be hated.

No two men ever exercised more influence over the schools of this country than Caleb Bingham and Noah Webster; Webster's Grammar was little used compared with Bingham's, but his Spelling Book was far more extensively used than the Spelling Book of Mr. Bingham, which was called the Child's Companion, which also must have passed through many editions. Mr. Bingham's Reading Books, the American Preceptor and Columbian Orator were more successful than Webster's Reading Books, which were comparatively little used. These two Authors divided the schools between them, and perhaps no names were so generally known to the children of the United States. Mr. Webster, with a vanity which never entirely forsook him, placed a wretched caricature of himself in one or more of his books, but Mr. Bingham's modesty shrunk from such an exhibition, and could only go so far as to give a picture of his school-house, that which was removed to make room for the present City Hall, in School Street.

Mr. Webster never became a bookseller; but, the success of his books, and the vertigo, brought on by confinement and laborious service, induced Mr. Bingham, before the year 1800, to relinquish his school and become a bookseller, in which employment he continued until his death in 1817.

The success of his private school, led many parents, who could not afford to educate their daughters at such a school, to inquire why public schools should not be established for girls as well as for boys, the schools of every other town in the Commonwealth being open to both sexes. The citizens

were moved; the supervision of the schools was taken from the selectmen and placed in the hands of a Select Committee; several new school-houses were built; a Reading department was added to the Writing; Mr. Bingham, was induced to give up his private school and take one of the public schools; girls were admitted in the warmer half of the year; grammar was first taught in the Boston schools, and thus the first great reformation was completed. "And then the schools had rest for many years."

"The Young Lady's *Accidence*" continued in the schools until about 1803, when what was called "An Abridgement of Murray's Grammar, by a Teacher of Youth," was substituted, and the sale of the "*Accidence*" declined, until, at the author's death, it was no longer an object for any one to print it.

WALLIS.

SELF CULTURE OF TEACHERS.

I have thus called attention to the obligation which rests upon teachers to qualify themselves for the discharge of the duties of their vocation, as one of the means to be employed in improving the condition of our common schools. The question here presents itself, "How shall they qualify themselves?" I answer, by the same process to which every man subjects himself who would become a proficient in his calling,—*by labor*. No School Committee's certificate, no Normal School, no Teacher's Institute, will, of itself alone, answer the purpose. The teacher constitutes no exception to the general rule for the attainment of moral or intellectual excellence. *He must labor*. I need not say that no trifling portion of that labor must be expended in the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the branches he is by law required to teach. But the field is still larger and broader. He must labor to acquire the spirit of kindness, that he may be loved; of impartiality, that he may be respected. To crown all, he must labor to make himself an example worthy of imitation. He must indulge in no habit which he would not willingly see his pupils contract; he must do no act he would not have them imitate; utter no word he would be ashamed to have them repeat.

In the work of preparation, the teacher is not left entirely to his own unaided effort. The work of moral culture, it is true, must be wrought out in the laboratory of his own heart; in the work of intellectual improvement, the acquisition of the science and art of teaching, he has many helps. An important one will be found in the careful perusal and study of the

writings of practical educationists. There are many such, which, to the young teacher desirous of excelling in his profession, will be of invaluable service. The teacher who permits his other avocations, or the fear of incurring a trifling expense, to debar him from the high privilege of communing, through their works, with those "excellent of the earth," knows not how costly is the sacrifice he makes for so paltry a pecuniary gain.—*Wm. G. Crosby.*

CHILDHOOD.

BY JENS BAGGESEN.—[A DANE.]

[From Longfellow's Poets and Poetry of Europe.]

There was a time when I was very small,
When my whole frame was but an ell in height;
Sweetly, as I recall it, tears do fall,
And, therefore, I recall it with delight.

I sported in my tender mother's arms,
And rode a horse-back on blest father's knee;
Alike were sorrows, passions, and alarms,
And gold, and Greek, and love, unknown to me.

Then seemed this world to me far less in size,
Likewise it seemed to me less wicked far;
Like points in heaven, I saw the stars arise,
And longed for wings that I might catch a star.

I saw the moon behind the islands fade,
And thought, "O were I on that island there,
I could find out of what the moon is made,
Find out how large it is, how round, how fair!"

Wondering, I saw God's sun through western skies
Sink in the ocean's golden lap at night,
And yet upon the morrow early rise,
And paint the eastern heaven with crimson light;

And thought of God, the gracious Heavenly Father,
Who made me, and that lovely sun on high,
And all those pearls of heaven, thick-strung together,
Dropped, clustering, from his hand o'er all the sky.

With childish reverence, my young lips did say
The prayer my pious mother taught to me;—
"O gentle God! O, let me strive alway
Still to be wise, and good, and follow thee!"

So prayed I for my father and my mother,
And for my sister, and for all the town;
For the King I knew not, and the beggar-brother,
Who, bent with age, went, sighing, up and down.

They perished, the blithe days of boyhood perished,
And all the gladness, all the peace I knew. |
Now have I but their memory, fondly cherished;—
"God! may I never, never lose that too!"

CRITICISM.

In our last number we published the request of an esteemed correspondent that some one would parse *what*, in the sentence, "I have more than I know *what* to do with." We have received no communication on the subject, and proceed, according to promise, to give our own theory upon it. We consider *what* to be a corruption of *quod*, as *how* and *who* are corruptions of *quo*. *Quod* and *quo*, are cases of the same relative, in Latin, and both are used as conjunctions or adverbs. *How* in our language retains its Latin meaning *what*, *manner* being understood, and it might have been used here for *what*. "I have more than I know *how* to do with." If *how* is ever an adverb, *what* is also, and is clearly so in the present case. But we call such a disposal of the word a dodging of the question. *What* must either be parsed as a relative or as an adjective qualifying *thing* understood. The word *thing* would be the object of *do*, and *what*, if called a relative, is the object of the same word *do*. If it be asked, what is to be done with *with*? we answer, it is a preposition governing *it* understood. If asked what noun *it* stands for? we answer, the noun of quantity, *more*.

But to our mind, the most interesting and the most difficult word in the sentence is *than*, and to this word, especially to its etymology, we invite the attention of teachers.

WALLIS.

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT.

If the House of Representatives should find time to attend to any legislative duties, this session, we may take occasion to commend to the notice of Congress the subject of an international copyright law. The matter is worthy of being alluded to once a year at least.

The evils of an unjust course, as illustrated by consequences, are most strikingly manifested in this very case. We deny to a British author his right to his own production when it comes to our shores,—a production as much and as truly his own property as though we were speaking of a manufacturer instead of an author, and of a bale of broadcloth rather than of a book. The injustice is manifest. If the same principle were applied to other sorts of property, we should be outlawed among nations, with the shame of knowing that we deserved to be.

The consequences are as manifest as the injustice. We are supplied with a foreign literature, not the growth of our

own institutions, not the offspring of a native genius inspired by the spirit of our republican freedom and civilization. No; in respect to literature, we are still in a colonial state. We are surrounded by a British atmosphere; we look at things from a British point of view. It is no answer to say that there are American authors, historians and others, whose works command circulation, notwithstanding the non-existence of an international copyright. Rules are proved by exceptions, where the exceptions, as in this case, are very few, and rather apparent than real exceptions. It is obvious that an American publisher will not pay for an original production, which may succeed or not, when he can get for nothing a British work, which he is sure will succeed. Publishers and booksellers, like other persons in business, have it in view to make money; they are the patrons of those authors who do not stand in need of patrons, and give their countenance to that literature out of which they can make most profit. Submerged under the flood of a foreign inundation, the elements out of which an American literature might grow up and flourish in a robust and sturdy hardihood, are suppressed and overwhelmed; no wholesome growth appears. If any shoots are visible above the surface, they are for the most part like water plants having no firm subsistence.—*Baltimore American.*

[The best comment upon the present condition of literary property may be found in the affecting circumstance, lately revealed by the philanthropic Elihu Burritt, who tells us that the venerable Dr. Dick is pining in poverty, and lacking the comforts which should surround old age and infirmity, while his valuable works are free for any one to print in this country, and entirely beyond his control. There is another strange feature of this business, which does not speak well for the morality of the age. If the excellent Dr. Dick had written a few crazy poems, or a few witty novels, and shown a few of the infirmities of genius by trampling on the Decalogue, and by rendering himself unworthy of Christian fellowship, a large subscription would probably have been raised for his benefit in England, and sentiment and sympathy would have opened many a mouth and many a purse in these remote States. As it stands, the Christian Philosopher who has not only revealed the wonders of countless worlds to our understanding, but brightened the hope of a better world beyond the skies, though enriching others, "has not where to lay his head."—ED.]

When you have given yourself up to idleness, it is vain to implore the help of the gods; for they help those only who help themselves.

WHAT YEAR IS IT?

[For the Journal.]

An amusing controversy is going on in regard to the question, whether the present year is the last of the first half of the nineteenth century, or the first year of the latter half of it. It would seem as if there could be no doubt on this subject, and yet intelligent men have taken opposite sides, and are very unwilling to yield the position they have assumed. The case seems so clear to our mind, that we are induced to say how we settled it. First, we went to the clock. The first hour is completed when the clock strikes one, and the first hour includes the space from 12 to 1. The number of times that the clock strikes, as the hands advance, indicates the completed hours, and, of course, the twelfth hour is completed when the clock strikes 12. Then we took our own age. Our first year was from birth till we were pronounced one year old. If a bell had then struck once, our age would have been indicated, and so it would have been in each successive year; until it struck 50 times, when we should have completed 50 years. Then we applied this to the beginning of time. The first year was from the beginning of creation to the year one, when we may suppose the great clock of time to have struck once. When it struck 100, the first century was completed. When it struck 1000, the first decade of centuries was completed. Of course, the first year of every century would be the time between the previous 100 and the following 1. When the knell of time sounded 50, 50 years were completed, and the first year of the second half century immediately commenced. So that the 50th year does not extend from 50 to 51, but from 49 to 50, and the first day of January, 1850, was the first *day*, of the first year, of the second half, of the nineteenth century. CHRONOS.

[The settlement of this question, we think, is a small matter compared with the error contained in a form of expression, relating to time, which is fast coming into use. To the question, what o'clock is it, we often hear the answer, "It is a quarter *of* one; it is 20 minutes *of* 2, it is 10 minutes *of* 3, &c." The answer should be, *it lacks* or *wants* a quarter of one, &c., or it is a quarter *before* one, &c. If we be asked, why it is improper to say, *it is a quarter of one*, we must ask, it is a quarter of one *what*? If the answer be, a quarter of *one hour*, or *of the hour one*, and no other correct answer can be given, the error is at once apparent; for, the hour one, or the first hour, extends from 12 to 1, and a quarter of it is only a quarter past 12. Some persons say, "It is a quarter *to* one," which can hardly be called incorrect, and yet the old

English expression, "it is a quarter *before* one," is preferable. The expression, therefore, "*it is a quarter of one*," is wrong, and must be avoided, for, as used, the "quarter of one" is three quarters of one, and not a moment less.

THE MONITORIAL SYSTEM.

The Dr. Bell alluded to in the following paragraph from the "Boston Watchman & Reflector," was the rival of Joseph Lancaster. Dr. Bell employed young persons who were not pupils as monitors, and in this respect differed from Lancaster, who preferred to use his more advanced pupils. The native city of Dr. Bell, was, we believe, St. Andrews in Scotland. Few teachers on any plan have been able to make such liberal bequests.

The Rev. Dr. Andrew Bell left \$200,000 for the use of this his native city, to found an institution where the languages and sciences should be taught according to the Monitorial system. The children of the poor are taught gratuitously, the fees for others are very trifling. About 800 young persons of both sexes are here receiving instruction. There are eight bursaries founded in connection with the institution. These are rewards for the eight who pass the best final examination, and wish to enter the University. The one who attains the highest standard of merit receives \$100 per annum; the two next \$75 per annum; the five next \$50 per annum. These bursaries are tenable for four years. Dr. Bell left \$50,000 to this city, the interest of which is to be spent in promoting the religious and moral improvement of the inhabitants. He also left \$50,000 to each of the following places, Edinburgh, Leith, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Cupar and Inverness, to establish schools on his favorite Monitorial system. G. M. V.

TOWN APPROPRIATIONS.

☞ Will the citizens or School Committees of the several towns see that provision is made for the purchase of OUTLINE MAPS and other necessary apparatus for the district schools? We hope the Legislature will do something to this end, but the schools need all the State will grant, and ten times as much besides. Let not another year be lost.

☞ All Communications, Newspapers, and Periodicals, for the Journal, should be addressed to Wm. B. Fowle, Editor, West Newton.

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